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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/736,605	12/17/2003	Yutaka Hirose	60188-731	4080

7590 12/20/2006
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Washington, DC 20005-3096

EXAMINER

TRAN, THIEN F

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2811

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	12/20/2006	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	10/736,605		HIROSE ET AL.	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Thien F. Tran		2811	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 September 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-9, 13 and 14 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 10-12 and 15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 16 and 17 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 09/15/2006 has been entered.

Specification

The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed, Method for fabricating semiconductor device.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 10-12 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kolodzey et al. (US 6,297,538) in view of Moriuchi (JP 07-297206).

With respect to claim 10, Kolodzey et al. discloses a method for fabricating a semiconductor device (Figs. 1a-1f), the method comprising the steps of thermally oxidizing a Group III nitride semiconductor layer (22, 10) to form a thermally oxidized

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insulating film (24) on a surface of the Group III nitride semiconductor layer; and forming a gate electrode (28, 32) containing an element (Al, Cu or Au) on the thermally oxidized insulating film. Kolodzey et al. does not disclose the gate electrode with Schottky characteristic containing an adhesion enhancing element and an element other than the adhesion enhancing element. Moriuchi discloses a gate electrode (WSi layer 9) of good Schottky characteristic containing an adhesion enhancing element (Si) and an element (W) other than the adhesion enhancing element. It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the gate electrode (28, 32) of Kolodzey et al. with good Schottky characteristic containing an adhesion enhancing element (Si) and an element (W) as taught by Moriuchi in order to obtain a low resistance gate electrode of good Schottky characteristic containing WSi which is free from peeling.

With respect to claim 11, Kolodzey et al. further discloses the step of forming the thermally oxidized insulating film (24) includes the step of forming an aluminum nitride layer (22) on the Group III nitride semiconductor layer (10) and then thermally oxidizing the aluminum nitride layer (22) to change the aluminum nitride layer into an aluminum oxide layer (24) and thereby form the thermally oxidized insulating film composed of the aluminum oxide layer.

With respect to claim 12, Kolodzey et al. in view of Moriuchi as described above further disclose the oxidized aluminum nitride layer (24) having a thickness less than 10 nm (col. 3, lines 43-47) which could be 3 nm or less that read on the claimed range.

Furthermore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the

time the invention was made to form the oxidized aluminum nitride layer (24) having the claimed range of thickness, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

With respect to claim 15, the adhesion enhancing element is Si.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 16 and 17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thien F. Tran whose telephone number is (571) 272-1665. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30AM - 5:00PM Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Elms can be reached on (571) 272-1869. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should

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you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Thien F Tran

Thien F Tran
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2811

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December 14, 2006